

THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN
ARCHITECTS — THE WISCONSIN CHAPTER A.I.A. AND THE PRODUCERS
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AUGUST

1947

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OCT 7 1947

LUKE 14 (28 - 30)

28. "FOR WHICH OF YOU, INTENDING TO
BUILD A TOWER, SITTETH NOT
DOWN FIRST, AND COUNTETH THE
COST, WHETHER HE HAVE SUFFI-
CIENT TO FINISH IT?

29. "LEST, HAPLY, AFTER HE HATH LAID
THE FOUNDATION, AND IS NOT ABLE
TO FINISH IT, ALL THAT BEHOLD
IT BEGIN TO MOCK HIM,

30. "SAYING, THIS MAN BEGAN TO BUILD
AND WAS NOT ABLE TO FINISH."

THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT

Official Publication

The State Association of Wisconsin Architects

Wisconsin Chapter, The American Institute of Architects

Producers' Council Club of Wisconsin

LEIGH HUNT, F.A.I.A., *Editor and Publisher*

ELIZABETH SCOTT HUNT, *Managing Editor*

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SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS

The Executive Board of the State Association of Wisconsin Architects met in the Colonial Room of the Plankinton House Saturday morning, September 6.

Present: Paul Brust, Edgar H. Berners, Leigh Hunt, Mark F. Pfaller, and Al. J. Seitz.

By Proxy: Emiel F. Klingler, Gage M. Taylor, George E. Foster, Perc Brandt, F. W. Raeuber, William V. Kaeser, Allen J. Strang, A. L. Seidenschwartz and Robert S. Chase.

Absent: None.

Also Present, four guests: Gerald J. Rice, Edmund J. Schrang, J. R. Patterson and R. R. Friauf.

The meeting was called to order by President Pfaller at 10:40 o'clock.

The Minutes of the Board meeting of July 19, were approved as published in the Wisconsin Architect.

The first order of business was the matter of a proposed book of house plans, the publishing of which had been offered by the Milwaukee Sentinel providing that the members of the State Association supply the plans.

After considerable discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried that letters should be written to all State Association members asking them to submit to the Plan Book Committee for their consideration and selection, not more than two plans and elevations of houses which have either been executed or are in sketch form.

Mr. Patterson, President of the Producers Council, Wisconsin Chapter, and Mr. Friauf, the Council's Convention Chairman, expressed the desire that more interest be shown on the part of the Architects in the exhibits displayed on the mezzanine and that these displays be visited by a larger number. They presented a scheme for attendance record which would entitle the Architects to participate in attendance prizes offered by the Producers' Club.

The Treasurer was instructed to pay bills for transportation of out of town directors.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 o'clock.

Respectfully submitted,

LEIGH HUNT, *Secretary*
State Association

THOMAS S. HOLDEN TO SPEAK AT CONVENTION BANQUET

Thomas S. Holden, President of the F. W. Dodge Corporation, New York City, will be the principal speaker at the Banquet to be held at the Plankinton House, Friday evening, October 17, opening the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the State Association of Wisconsin Architects.

The entire convention program will appear in the next issue of The Wisconsin Architect which will be in the hands of the members on October 10.

* * *

PRODUCERS' COUNCIL MEETING IN ANNUAL CONVENTION

The course of the building industry in the months ahead will be analyzed by industry and government officials at the opening session of the annual meeting of the Producers' Council, national organization of building products manufacturers, which will be held October 2 and 3 at the Commodore Hotel in New York City.

Major General Philip B. Fleming, administrator of the Federal Works Agency, will discuss plans for construction of public works, and John L. Haynes, chief of the Construction Division of the U. S. Department of Commerce, will speak on the improvement in the building outlook.

Wilson Wright, economist of the Armstrong Cork Co. and chairman of the Council's Construction Economics Committee, will present the committee's forecasts of future construction volume.

New developments in home building will be described by William J. Levitt, president of Levitt & Sons.

The meeting will open with an address of welcome by John Splain, Commissioner of Construction of New York City, and a report by Tyler S. Rogers, Council president.

Charles F. Cellarius, treasurer of the American Institute of Architects, will address a luncheon meeting on the opening day.

Preceding the regular sessions, the Council's New York Chapter will hold an exhibit at the Commodore on October 1 of new building materials and equipment, to which building industry representatives are invited.

* * *

MR. KIRCHHOFF CONTRIBUTES

The quotation from the BIBLE printed on the cover page, was handed by Edgar Doudna, Secretary of the Board of Regents of Normal Schools, to Roger C. Kirchhoff, State Architect, who in turn has handed it to the Editor of The Wisconsin Architect.

"It would appear," writes Mr. Kirchhoff, "that times have not changed very much and the issues of building costs have been a problem since biblical times."

* * *

Copies of the New Schedule of Proper Minimum Charges and Professional Practice may be obtained through the Secretary of the State Association of Wisconsin Architects, 3800 N. Humboldt Ave., Milwaukee 12, Wis., at 3c a copy, plus cost of mailing.

NOTICE!



THE FIFTEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE
STATE ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS
WILL BE HELD
FRIDAY, OCTOBER SEVENTEENTH
AND
SATURDAY, OCTOBER EIGHTEENTH

1947

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SKYSCRAPERS HERE TO STAY? NO RUSH TO TALL BUILDINGS

From Christian Science Monitor

Looks like a trick question, doesn't it? Something like asking if the automobile is here to stay! Yet, there may be a point to it, after all. It may be no small factor that, for the first time since the skyscraper era dawned, in the 1880's, America is giving lofty building plans the cold shoulder. Only a scant handful of tall office buildings and hotels are under construction in this country today! Twenty years ago, New York City alone had that many mushrooming on its horizon.

What's wrong? Have we lost confidence in one of the peculiar greatnesses of America? Or are we up against another one of those perplexing engineering problems that have beset the path of skyscraper proponents from time to time? Let's see what's been going on.

In 1883, when the Home Insurance Company of New York engaged William Le Baron Jenney, a Chicago architect, to erect a tall building containing a steel and iron frame, enclosed with masonry, there was much head shaking! Experienced architects and engineers flatly declared that expansion and contraction of the iron would seriously crack the masonry and render the structure unsafe in just a few years. Many laymen were willing to bet that the thing would topple over in the first stiff gale!

Chicago was chosen as the site for the new type of edifice because it was a young, daring city, unhampered by traditions and codes. It was the logical place for progressive builders to demonstrate their radical ideas. New York, with two centuries behind it, was hesitant about structural experimentation.

Mr. Jenney's work neither crumbled nor blew over, and quite a flurry of structures, embodying this new theory of design, followed on its heels. The 13-story Tacoma Building, which went up in 1887, treated Chicago's "sidewalk superintendents" to the startling spectacle of outside brick walls being laid on shelves several stories in the air! Two years later, the Rand McNally Building boasted the first rolled steel beams and columns, fabricated in standard shapes and riveted together throughout. Then Mr. Jenney put up the Leiter Building, first one completely free of self-sustaining walls.

Architects Daniel H. Burnham and John W. Root drew widespread attention in 1890 with their 21-story Masonic Temple, then the highest tenantable edifice in the world! It was the object of much wonder and speculation, and many considered it the ultimate of this type of construction.

Steel frame buildings took hold rapidly, and architects in other localities were fired with enthusiasm. Leroy S. Buffington of Minneapolis learned from patent offices here and abroad that no patents had been issued on the idea, so he drew up plans and made an application, using a 28-story structure as an illustration. The patent, granted May 22, 1888, covered the idea in the United States, England, France, and Germany, but it was too late. During an infringement suit later, Mr. Buffington learned from the courts that he had lost his priority because the idea had al-

ready been put to practical test before his application was filed.

Real progress was finally made when Cyrus W. Baldwin perfected the hydraulic elevator. It quickly superseded all the others, for it was both reasonably fast and efficient.

Yet the problem was not completely licked. Practical limitations on the length of hydraulic elevator plungers all but prohibited their use in buildings of over 20 stories. The electric elevator, first tried out in 1887, seemed to be the obvious answer, but it was not until 1919 that a suitable method of current control could be worked out to make this type of lift smooth and safe. Today, the electric elevator is supreme, and, in many modern buildings, it has become semi-automatic. Where express runs permit it, such as the 65-floor nonstop lift in the RCA Building, New York, speeds of 1,400 feet per minute are common!

The major engineering problems seem to have been solved. From a technical standpoint, skyscrapers have no definite height limitations. If enough ground space could be secured, it would be quite practical to erect a building one mile high!

GEORGE O. POMMER, JR.

* * *

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OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE SIXTH PAN AMERICAN CONGRESS OF ARCHITECTS

By FRANCIS VIOLICH

Housing and Planning Specialist Division of Labor and Social Information, Pan American Union

This fall the first Inter-American conference in the field of architecture, planning and housing to be held since before the war will take place in Lima, Peru. The Sixth Pan American Congress of Architects, scheduled to assemble October 15 to 25, marks a new opportunity to bring to a focus the many problems in the field of urban development to be found in North and South America alike. The Fifth Congress of Architects took place in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1940 and previous congresses have been held in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires at regular intervals since 1920. The lack of opportunity during the war years to bring together members of the profession for the purpose of discussing the new ideas, techniques and problems with which the building field is faced makes the announcement of this Congress of particular importance.

The topics making up the Agenda cover the principal problems with which professionals in the architectural and planning fields are especially concerned today. These include six items:

1. American Architecture in its Progressive Stages of Development and its Influence on Present Conti-

nental Architecture.

2. Characteristics and Functions of Planned Satellite Community Units in the Cities of the Americas.

3. Present Tendencies in the Teaching of Architecture.

4. Architecture as a Factor in Social Welfare and the Problem of Low-Cost Housing in the Americas.

5. Contemporary Architecture, its Esthetic Expression and New Construction Methods and Materials.

The Pan American Union, through its Division of Labor and Social Information, has been working in close cooperation with The American Institute of Architects, the American Institute of Planners and the Department of State in preparing for participation by the United States in the Congress. These four organizations received official invitations early this year to take part in the Congress. Joint professional cooperation has included the formulating of the program for, and the assembling of, the United States exhibit, the selection of technical papers to be submitted to the Congress and the discussions as to the composition of the official delegation.

The principal representative of The A.I.A. and the person in the United States on the Permanent Committee of the Congress is Mr. Julian Clarence Levi, Chairman of The Institute's Committee on International Relations; while representing the A.I.P. is Mr. Paul Oppermann, Chairman of the latter organization's Committee on International Relations.



A KOHLER washroom solves many problems

Home owners are becoming more aware of the value of added sanitary convenience. The appeal of a Kohler washroom is especially pronounced, for it takes little space, yet it answers many needs — reducing through-the-house traffic, providing convenience for guests, and simplifying child training.

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The chief responsibility of these four organizations has been the preparation of the United States exhibit. After agreement on a general program suggested by the representative of the Pan American Union, material was requested from various sources. The program was designed to provide a sense of continuity for the topics that had been proposed by the Organizing Committee and to tell a story that would appeal to the broad thinking of the Latin Americans in regard to architecture, its purposes, uses and relation to society.

The exhibit was broken down into detailed items intended to give a bird's-eye view of architectural and planning practices and accomplishments in the United States today. The show opens with a general background of the United States — a suggestion of the character of the land and the distribution of urban and rural population. Here an attempt is made to picture the American people and the way in which they live in relation to their buildings and towns — the basis for contemporary architecture. Included in this section is a brief historical review of popular architecture.

This is to be followed by a presentation of architecture in four functional groups: Architecture for Living — small houses, large residences, apartments; then, Architecture for Working — offices, factories; followed by Architecture for Recreation — sports facilities, theaters, museums; and finally, Architecture for Public Services — hospitals, schools, public buildings, shopping centers, airports.

The community as a whole is dealt with in the next unit of the exhibit, endeavoring to show how the foregoing elements are united together by our collective facilities, and what we are doing to plan our cities and towns, making the individual parts function properly. Included here are planned neighborhood units, redevelopment projects, low-rental housing communities and city and regional plans. A concluding section demonstrates building techniques emphasizing prefabrication of dwellings.

The material has been assembled from the photographs sent in by members of The A.I.A., the files of the *Architectural Forum* and Public Buildings Administration. The planning material was procured by the American Institute of Planners from the Study Collection on Housing and Planning prepared by the National Housing Agency at the request of the War Department for use in German reconstruction. A section on the work of architectural students in this country has been assembled by Columbia University. The Department of State's Graphics and Special Services Branch has undertaken the design of the show and the mounting of material on about forty Celotex

panels, four feet square. Shipment to Peru is planned for September first. Captions will be in Spanish.

Another important matter being handled by the cooperating groups is the recommendation of the official delegation of five persons to represent the United States. Final selection will be up to the State Department. The A.I.A. and A.I.P. groups have been working to secure technical papers on the theme subjects to be submitted to the Congress, these to be prepared by any members of the professions, whether or not they plan to attend the Congress.

The importance of professional participation in such a Congress both on the part of the architects and planners through their institutes cannot be over-emphasized. The Latin Americans carry on a great deal of international activity and are particularly anxious to know what is going on in the United States. There has been a tendency since the close of the war for the Latin Americans to again turn toward Europe — especially to England and France, for sources of information on new techniques to meet building and planning problems. Their cities today are faced with redevelopment problems which in many instances are equal to those of war-devastated countries. That is why, in view of Latin America's understanding of the great technical achievements in our country, these architects and planners particularly look to us for solutions to present urban problems. On the one hand, they have built such outstanding examples of modern architecture as the Ministry of Education in Brazil, the Facultad de Ingeniería in Montevideo, and apartment houses of advanced design in Buenos Aires and Santiago. Yet, on the other hand, they need some 25,000,000 low-rental houses to replace only the worst of the present dwellings and have only been able to build, through public and semi-public financing, about 100,000 units. Their industrialization is increasing and this calls for the introduction of new building techniques in many fields.

There are advantages for us, too, in contact with the Latin Americans. From them we may gain some of their breadth of imagination and social approach and perhaps even technical information — toward reconstruction of our own cities where many problems also prevail. From their point of view and from ours the most effective cooperation is perhaps the personalized one, through the professions by means of the contacts provided by such activities as the coming Congress.

— Journal of the A.I.A.

* * *

CONVENTION PROGRAM

The entire convention program will appear in the next issue of *The Wisconsin Architect* which will be in the hands of the members on October 10.



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HOUSES ARE FOR HUMANS

From Architectural Record

This statement is, of course, axiomatic, even though it may be lost sight of by a designer who becomes intrigued with architecture for architecture's sake, or with ornamentation for virtuosity's sake, or with peculiar forms for originality's sake, for architects are humans too.

The fact that humans are such peculiar and varied creatures with so many prides, prejudices and preconceived ideas about what they think they want and need in their houses, makes domestic architecture the fascinating study it has always been.

We, as architects, sometimes forget that our clients are human, with all that that implies of human frailties and perversities, and forget that prospective owners' desires are emotionally rather than rationally conditioned. Long association with certain architectural forms often have produced in their minds rather definite ideas of what their homes should be and look like.

"All know the influence of early home-teachings, youthful reminiscences and associations; if these were always of the simple, the beautiful and reasonable in the home itself; if the very building never arose before the memory without confirming by its ever-speaking testimony the advantage of embodiment of these principles, and the harmony and loveliness of the result; how better armed to resist the temptations of a false and tricky taste, and to carry on the advocacy

of the nobly true, the inventive mind of the artist and the appreciation of the amateur would be!"

A further analysis of our clients' motives seems indicated if we are to be successful in influencing their thinking to the extent of being able to produce designs which we feel our contemporary professionals will approve. Pride is one of the strongest underlying motives of most clients. Their houses are to them an evidence of their social position and their business success. They naturally want something they can show off to their neighbors, to show how smart and up-to-date they are. For this reason they are usually terrifically "style conscious" — style, that is, in the sense of fashion rather than "style" in a purist esthetic sense. In this lies the hope of the thoughtful creative architect, the modern architect, for as time goes on and the social and financial leaders in the community become more and more convinced that "it is smart to be modern," by just so much does the sincere architect's task become easier in developing advanced designs.

On the other hand, the client's proclivity to be one of the herd, to follow the leader, may be the *bete noir* of the architect, frustrating his attempts to produce a more rational design, when the pace-setters seek social prestige and established security by harking back to feudal forms or to assumed ancestral homes.

This client gregariousness accounts for the fact that neighborhoods grow predominantly Colonial, Spanish, or Ye Olde English, for a client often will put up with

1915



*22 KWH per mo.

1930



*50 KWH per mo.

1945



*116 KWH per mo.

*Actual Average number of KWH used, per month, in Milwaukee homes.

1960



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both inconvenience and exorbitant expense in order to be in the style swim of the social group which he aspires to emulate. "Style," or rather "fashion," seeps downward, which, of course, accounts for row after row of pseudo-English or pseudo-Colonial small houses.

The hope for the future of domestic architecture is this very potent motivating force, the emulation of those who are looked up to as leaders in the community. The desire on the part of these leaders to assert their leadership by being different and advanced is another hopeful factor, for this desire to set the pace, to establish the fashion, gives the architect his greatest opportunity for creating houses nearer to his heart's desire. *"The pertinacity with which every newly built house, if in any respect out of the common way, is discussed, the curiosity shown by the strollers around it during the progress of the works, and very speedily the avidity with which any scrap or morsel of peculiar detail is seized upon and copied, are proofs of the awakened interest it excites."*

The public is being conditioned to new concepts of architecture, or to new emphasis at least on certain aspects of domestic architecture, through the printed word and the public press. Only a few years ago the consumer home magazines were highly critical of — and even ridiculed — the early efforts to create a more rational architecture. Today they vie with one another to show with adulation, though not always with discrimination, the latest works of the most advanced designers. As this popular movement grows, we believe that there will be more critical analysis of these houses, more help to the prospective client in separating the wheat from the chaff, more encouragement to the innovations and ideas that will prove sound.

The analytical sentiment of this age will, before very long, lead it to reject all that has not a purpose and a use — a purpose of utility, a use in aiding harmony of effect; beauty only will be valued — it will only be considered as such when so produced, and out of this sturdy determination to throw aside all not marking a meaning and intention, will result a grand, united, all-pervading influence, which at no very distant time will develop itself into a form and style. How — the Giver of Genius best can show! But it will come, depend upon it; nor will silly, trick-sied imitations, and obstinate adherence to unmeaning forms long delay it."

What will prove sound — useful, economical, convenient, pleasing — in the long run, time alone will tell, for judgments on the part of protagonist or public may be prejudiced by intellectual over-emphasis on one hand or by conditioned emotional responses on the other. Reason and emotion both enter into judg-

ments and both must be taken into account.

Now we are in an age of especially active experimentation, of efforts to improve our personal environment, of trial and error, and our judgments change with the times. Our developing contemporary style may well follow the course suggested by Pope for something quite different —

... is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

What shall we embrace in house design? What are the criteria in judging a house? For a house can be judged from many points of view depending largely on the judge — and on the times. The home owner himself, or herself, may judge on different bases at different times and under different circumstances. He may judge the house as a home — an environment conducive to the happiness of the family. He may judge it as a financial investment, or as a badge of social standing. He may praise it for its convenient plan, condemn it for its costly upkeep and repair. The engineer might judge it on structural and mechanical soundness or economy of means-to-ends; the banker, on quick and high resale value; the architect — depending on his age, training and previous condition of servitude — on its organic functioning, or on the refinement of its period detail. Nor are all architects entirely free from a tendency to confuse stylistic forms with efficient functioning. Non-functional planning, inconvenient or wasteful space arrangement, can be given the outward forms of functional architecture.

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This is especially true as "Modern" becomes a style and its forms can be imitated without understanding the philosophy and logic which gave rise to these forms. Unfortunately, it is easier to copy a cliché than to think a problem through.

To return to the possibility of establishing criteria for judging a house — or houses for humans — of establishing standards of comparative judgment (albeit those standards must be raised as advances are inevitably made) it might be well to list again the functions of the house, thus to provide a scorecard of facilities, provisions, or characteristics that are essential or desirable.

The house should be designed to provide — efficiently, economically and attractively — adequate enclosed, semi-enclosed and open space so planned as to accommodate the persons and paraphernalia involved in all the activities of the family, individually and collectively. This includes:

1. Protection from the elements — from rain, storm, wind, fire, dust and changes in temperature.
2. Safety of persons and personal property from harm or loss by persons, animals or insects.
3. Privacy from intrusion by unwanted persons, sights or sounds. Individual privacy for each person.
4. Convenience in space arrangement, furnishing and equipment, for ease in use and to save time, steps, work; minimizing costs of operation and repair.
5. Flexibility. Adaptability to changing needs and uses.
6. Abundance of air, light (natural and artificial) and sunshine, with devices for their selective control.
7. Temperature and humidity control.
8. Sound control.
9. Complete sanitary facilities.
10. Facilities for rest, recreation, exercise, and cultural and social activities.

ANTHONY WUCHTERL

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14. Esthetic appeal — that elusive, hard-to-define character (beauty, if you will) that produces in the beholder and user a spiritual lift, a sense of well-being, of appropriateness of form, color and materials to their purposes.

Let our judgment of houses for humans be based on these 14 points.

"Constructive skill in building and ingenious adaptation of mechanical contrivances to meet the wants of domestic life, are the grand distinctive excellencies of this age; in no period of artistic history have we evidences of construction being so well understood, or of the use of materials so various and so scientifically adapted to their several purposes, as at the present time. It is the knowledge of the principles of design — the art of architecture — that seems wanting. . . . Yet we have construction superiority on our side; we have better tools to work with; more varied materials; scientific and reliable calculations upon which to base their proportions for purposes of strength and resistance, and the examples of by-gone beauty to work upon — surely, with all these advantages it cannot be that the dawn of a better intelligence will be long withheld!"

Strange as it may seem, the quoted paragraphs in italics were not written today — they were written by Gervase Wheeler, architect, in *Rural Homes*, published by Charles Scribner in 1852. It may be that from time immemorial houses have been for humans.

* * *

PRODUCERS COUNCIL PRESIDENT TALKS ON BUILDING CODES

Hundreds of communities which have not revised their building codes in recent years can reduce local building costs appreciably by eliminating obsolete and unnecessarily restrictive provisions from their codes, Tyler S. Rogers, president of the Producers' Council stated recently.

"Although good progress has been made in the modernization of local codes since the end of the war, many communities have not yet begun to work on the problem," Rogers said.

"In view of the urgent need for lowering the cost of building homes and other buildings, code provisions which prevent the use of new money-saving materials or methods or which add unnecessarily to the cost of building should be revised and modernized at the earliest possible date.

"All communities are urged to adopt the recommended national code standards which have been developed by industry processes, through the American Standards Association and other recognized organizations.

"The adoption of standard code provisions greatly simplifies the task of modernizing local codes, saving both time and expense for the local government concerned.

"When the savings from building code revision are combined with those arising from research being

done in the use of materials in combination, the engineering of homes and other structures, and from the adoption of modular coordination, substantial reductions in the cost of building can be accomplished in every locality."

* * *

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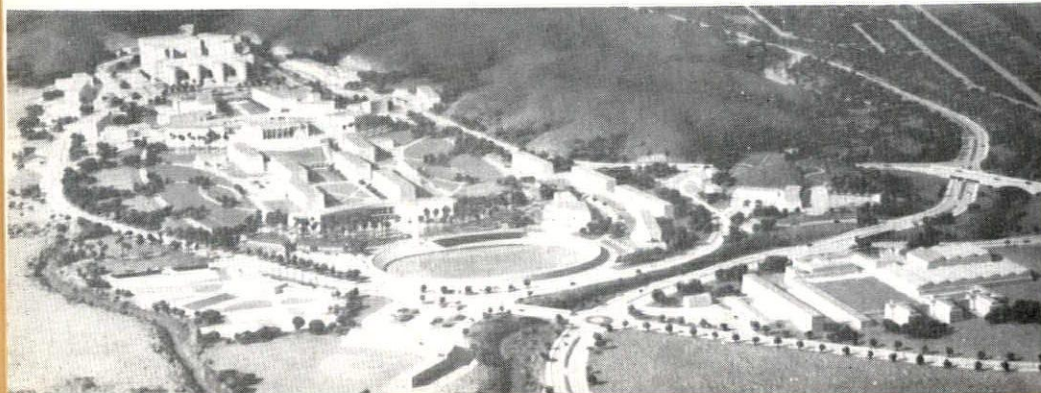
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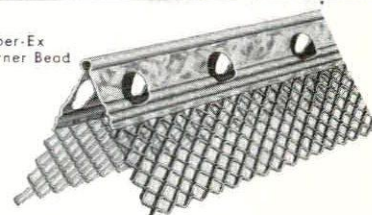
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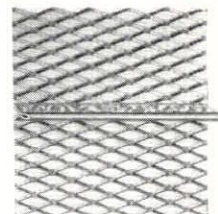
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